

2007

# LLUM: Light and Reflection

Kazue Taguchi

*Virginia Commonwealth University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd>

 Part of the [Fine Arts Commons](#)

© The Author

---

Downloaded from

<http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd/868>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact [libcompass@vcu.edu](mailto:libcompass@vcu.edu).

© Kazuo Taguchi May 2007  
All Rights Reserved



# LLUM: LIGHT AND REFLECTION

A thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University

By

Kazue Taguchi

Master of Fine Art, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2007  
Bachelor of Fine Art, Joshibi University of Art and Design, Japan 1997

Director: Jack Wax  
Glass Area Lead Professor

Virginia Commonwealth University  
Richmond, Virginia  
May 2007

## Table of contents

### Page

Acknowledgements	ii
Artist Statement	1
Introduction/ Unconscious Influences	2
Reflection	2
Craft	3
Moon	5
The Development of the Work	8
Educational Experience	8
Reflection	9
Content Issues and the Creation of a Relaxing Space	17
Light Installation in the Natural Light Space	22
Industrial Material	24
Thesis	25
Conclusion	29
Bibliography	31
List of Plates	32
Vita	33

## Acknowledgements



## **Artist Statement**

When I was nineteen years old, I traveled to ten countries in Europe. While there, I visited many museums and monuments, but it was in the solemn churches that I first saw stained glass and my aesthetic awakening occurred. My first impression was of a “living painting”. By this I mean that a stained glass window is a non-static painting, as its appearance is dependant on the quality of light that shines though its panes. The same stained glass window looks different in the morning, evening and night. It has one color scheme on a sunny day and another on a cloudy day. The same window can look like a completely different work depending on its lighting. Most of the windows I saw were figurative, but the projections they made on the wall and floors were abstract. To me these projections seemed like “color stains”, that moved with the sun and the passing of time. The solemn environment of these old churches looked like a huge light installation to a young girl from a country where centuries old stained glass installations did not exist.

Currently, I make my work using reflective material and light. In the case of my outdoor pieces, they capture different “colorscapes” depending on the time of day. These reflective materials patch together and create new landscapes out of their natural surroundings. In the case of my indoor pieces, when light hits the surface, a complex interplay of reflections and shadows are created.

The relationship between my work and my interest in reflection is the most exciting part of my creative research. Like sound, memory, feeling and imagination, light is intangible and invisible, but its effect on our lives is profound. My interest in creating works with light is in experiencing the phenomenon of their visual qualities as

well as in the creation of a relaxing and sublime space.

### **Unconscious influences**

#### **Reflection**

A couple of years ago, my design teacher talked to my class at the glass school in Barcelona, Spain. “Since olden times, Japanese people have been enjoying their gardens in all four seasons. As you may know, most traditional Japanese houses have a corridor within. Then, there are sliding doors to the outside instead of windows. Each season, the flowers and leaves in the garden would change colors, but one thing, a stone jar filled with water, remained no matter the time of the year.” She asked us, “According to old Japanese tradition, people opened the sliding doors, and used the stone jar inside the house. What was it for?” I was surprised to hear her question. I felt all of my Spanish peers’ eyes turn to me to answer the question because I was the Japanese student.

No one could answer her question. About two minutes passed then, finally, the teacher opened her mouth to speak, all of the eyes moved from me to her. “The people used it to see the moon which was reflected on the water from inside of the house.” One of my Spanish peers said, “Really? Why didn’t they just step out to the garden and look up to the moon? That’s easier.” I did not feel the same confusion as my peer, because I could understand why Japanese people enjoyed seeing the reflection of the swaying moon on the surface of the water. I felt this emotional connection in my body. Looking back on that moment, I now realize that even though I had been living in foreign countries for almost six years, my identity was still firmly planted in my Japanese heritage.

## **Craft**

In my Barcelona design class, in addition to showing us the beauty of traditional Japanese architecture, the teacher gave us examples of traditional types of packaging. I can still clearly remember the traditional package used to transport eggs. About eight eggs were held in knitted rice straw and each egg had its own space. These spaces were knitted together vertically, taking on the shape of a totem pole. Unfortunately, beautiful designs such as this have disappeared from our modern society.

I gazed upon the screen which showed the image of the egg package. I was impressed by the beauty of its rational and simple form, while at the same time I was startled by how much time people used to take in making the utilitarian items of the past. This package reminded me greatly of an ivory ball which I once saw at the National Palace Museum in Taiwan. A set of twenty-one concentric spheres were formed with human figures in an openwork relief. Carved out of a single chunk of ivory, the entire piece was approximately five inches in diameter.

It took three generations to make it. The craftsman who started to carve it could not finish it in his lifetime, so his son took over the task. This son spent his entire lifetime carving it as well, but unfortunately he could not complete it. Finally, the grandson completed the process. I imagine so much drama in that tiny detailed and intricate ball. I feel that the ball, shared by all of the craftsmen, became a part of the family. According to Chinese art history, the craftsmen held their breath while carving the ivory, achieving an effect that would also prompt viewers to hold their breath.

Since I was a child, I have been fascinated by European culture. Consequently, in my youth, I did not appreciate much about Asian art. Perhaps this was because it was

too close to me and I could not see it with fresh eyes. As the proverb says, “you are apt to overlook something worthwhile close at hand.” But this work was different. It did not matter if it was in an Asian or Western style; I had an experience of transcendence while gazing at that piece.

That *Set of concentric ivory balls with human figure in openwork relief*, by its explanatory title, may be categorized as a high craft. Since I moved to the United States, I have noticed that people here generally think the category of art is higher than that of craft. In Asia, we see astonishing craft works frequently, and therefore we assess its value as the same as art. Personally, I think art and craft are on the same level but in different fields. In Japan for example, we have some people who are designated National Treasures by the government. They can be painters, traditional instrument musicians, dancers, craftsmen and so on. We have equal respect for those in each of these categories.



-Set of concentric ivory balls with human figure in openwork relief (21 layers of them)

National Palace Museum in Taiwan (Figure.1)

“Art” in Japanese writing is “芸術” and “craft” is “工芸”. Both words are a combination of two characters. Art and craft, both have the character “芸”, which primarily means “performance”. Then art has one more character “術”, this itself means “magic”. And craft has “工” which itself means “make or maker”. Then literally, art could mean “The performance of magic” and craft could be “The performance by the maker”. The characters seem to suggest that craft places more stress on the essentials of making and art concentrates more upon an essential sort of magical creation.

In the case of Europe, before Impressionism (in the late nineteenth century), I feel most of the artists, whether sculptors or painters, were masters because they had been practicing for years. When they took apprentices, each of these people had specialized work. For example, in the case of a painting studio, apprentice A, B and C would always paint background, apprentices D and E painted human costume and apprentices F, G and H painted parts of the human body. Then the master painted the most important part (for example eyes or hands) and gave the final touch to the painting. The studio in that time was like a little factory of art.

I think in the art work of that time, the craftsmanship was valued more than the level of personal emotion expressed by the artist. As the most of the content in art work was based on mythology and history, the role of the artist was to recreate those stories. After Impressionism, the content in art became more personal; the artist began to express their particular emotion in their art work.

## **Moon**

For thousands of years in Japan and China, we have enjoyed the tradition of



gazing at the moon. About the eighth century, in the Heian period, aristocrats started having moon viewing parties by getting in a boat on the pond in their gardens, and admiring the reflection of the swaying moon on the surface of the water. People enjoyed drinking sake and competing to make improvised tankas, (thirty-one syllable Japanese poems). In the seventeenth century, in the Edo period, watching the moon became popular with common people during the harvest festival. They made offerings of vegetables and pampas grass to the moon. The pampas grass was a symbolic offering; it was a wish for their rice plants to grow as strong as the pampas grass.

In Japan, we enjoy seeing cherry blossoms day and night in the spring. Because the blossoms come and go very quickly we enjoy them day and night as much as we can. It is truly beautiful watching the pale pink cherry blossoms in the moonlight. They seem to be floating in the darkness. Because the branches of the trees do not let moonlight to pass, they become a part of the darkness while the cherry blossom's petals are translucent and let the moonlight pass through.

In the springtime, we look at the "Sakura map" which charts the cherry blossom flowering times. It is usually broadcast after the weather on TV. This shows how much Japanese people love cherry blossoms. Flowers, birds, the wind and the moon are the four elements most often used as the basis for poetry composition in Japan. Generally in classical Japanese literature, when people talked about flowers it automatically referred to cherry blossoms. These four elements have been included in Japanese poems and literature throughout time.

Japanese people traditionally thought that the moon was a mirror that reflected one's mind. Other cultures value it as well. For example, in Arab countries, people compare the moon to beautiful women, because of its beauty and mystery. In Europe,

people believed that the full moon confused people's mind, as can be evidenced when the wolf man changes under a full moon (the Goddess of the moon symbolized death). These instances indicate that traditional western people had differing interpretations of the moon.

Some Japanese architecture is influenced by the moons' position. Katsura-Rikyu (an old palace) is famous for its architecture, which was based on the positioning of the moon. This palace was built for the Emperor Katsuranomiyu in 1624 specifically to watch the moonrise in the middle of autumn. The palace and its gardens were situated and arranged in the positions most suitable for watching the moon. In the Japanese autumn and wintertime, the air becomes dry and the moon appears very clearly in the sky. Also, autumn is not cold yet, therefore people are able to admire the moon during this season.

Ever since thousands of years ago, the Japanese people enjoyed having moon watching parties and made many poems inspired by this activity. I imagine that, in the past, people related more to nature than we do today. Unfortunately, my generation does not regard the moon in the same way that they did in the past. Nowadays, we are either too busy to take care to admire the moon or we are distracted with various other forms of entertainments.

I use reflective effects in my art work. When I think of light, I am intuitively reminded of the sun and the moon. Of the sun and the moon, which one's light is closest to my work? I feel my body of work has a rather essential feature more like that of the ephemeral moon light versus that of the brilliant sun light. There is something mysterious in the moonlight, though I realize that in actuality, it is a reflection of the sun.

## **Development of the work**

### **Educational experience**

Since I moved to the United States about two years and a few months ago, light has become the central medium in my work. I painted oil paintings from junior high school through my undergraduate years at Joshibi University of Art and Design in Japan. During that time, I carefully paid attention to the contrast of light in my paintings. After that, I moved to Spain to learn stained glass techniques.

I have been fascinated by European stained glass windows since that first trip I took to Europe twelve years ago. At that moment, I wanted to paint on a sheet of glass; and when I first experienced these glassworks, I wanted to see how the light would react to my painting. Upon my return to Spain, I learned how to make what they categorize as contemporary stained glass, to restore old stained glass and to fuse, slump and cast glass at The Barcelona Glass Center. I lived there for seven years.

When I look at my background, I realize I have always felt the importance of light in my work. Though light was less central to my work when I was younger, it developed into my primary medium as I began graduate course work at Virginia Commonwealth University.

The graduate school experience at Virginia Commonwealth University has been greatly beneficial in helping me to develop this interest. The feedback I received in the critique class gave me a fuller perspective on my work that has allowed my vision to expand. In addition, many national and international artists lectures were held on campus. As graduate students we have the opportunity to interact with these artists and discuss our art work in studio visits. The university is also close enough to New York

City so that I have had the chance to visit there often to see works at the forefront of the art world. Through these experiences my approach to my work has changed. All of the education I have had in painting and working in glass in three different countries -Japan, Spain and the States- has pulled me to create my present reflective works.

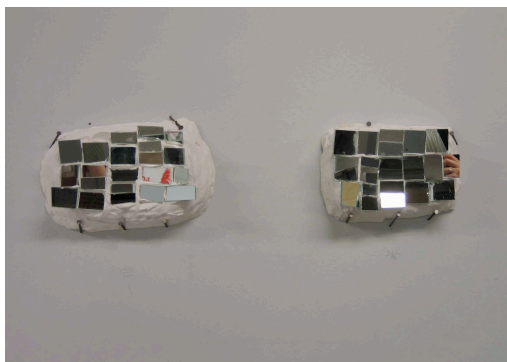
## Reflection

When I came to VCU, I began to be interested in reflective effects. I started to investigate a new way of working with mirrors. Before I discovered the mirror as medium, it was simply a flat surface to see my reflection. As I experimented with different angles and sizes I was surprised by the results.

### *=Are eyes more eloquent than lips? / 2005*

Plaster, mirror, 5" x 8" (each)

I bought sheets of mirror and I leaned them against a wall. I did not know what I would do with them, for a few weeks I simply gazed at my face, eyes, nose, mouth, and so on. Then my eyes in the mirror reminded me a proverb, *Eyes are more eloquent than lips*. I wondered at the fact that eyes have such strong expression, but is it stronger than speaking? In Figure 2, the two pieces look similar, but when you get close to the object on the left, many eyes and one month are reflected back. Conversely, the object on the right reflects back many mouths and one pair of eyes (see, Figure. 3).



- Installation view (Figure.2)

- Detail of the piece on the left (Figure.3)

**=*The landscape in mind / 2005***

Mirror sculpture, 2 projectors, 280 slide images of Spain

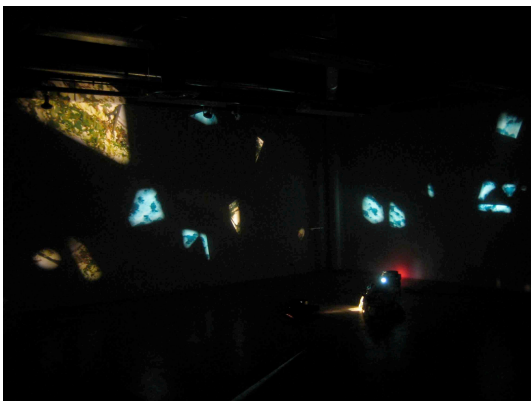
Dimension Variable

This project was set up in the following way: the reflective object was placed in the middle of the floor in the dark room, the formed a mountain shape which was made up of cut mirrors. The slide images were projected onto the mirrors from two different projectors. Fragmentary landscape images were reflected into a scattered set of images, onto the surrounding walls and ceiling. Some images were stretched depending on the gallery space.

This work is based on the scenery in Spain, which still exists in my mind's eye. My memories are in fragments, which is not unlike my project.

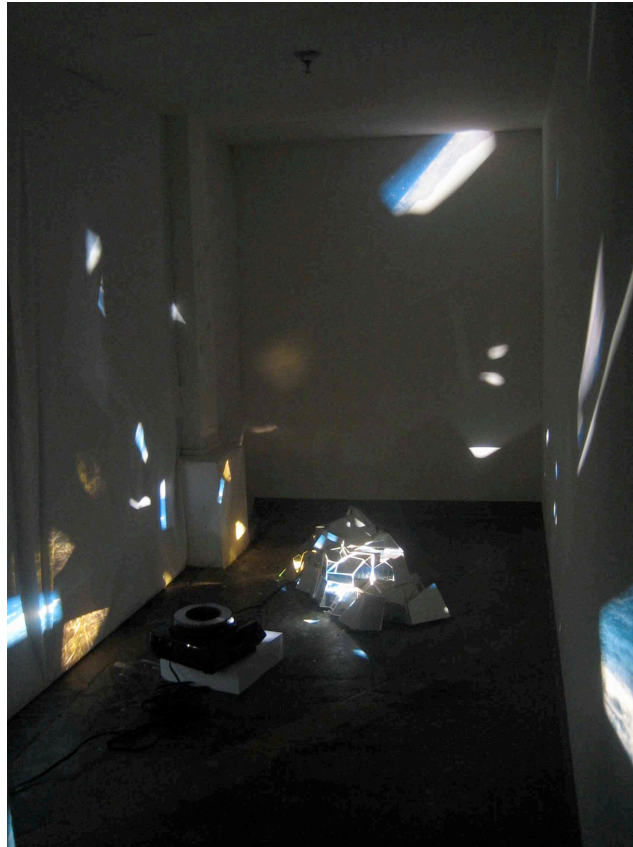
*"The profound experiences are ultimately transformed, whether unconsciously or voluntarily, into a universe dominated by memory and image. The memory's image is stored outside time, sailing freely through the irregular domains of the ego, while preserving the right to appear or hide at will."*(1)

*"Memory is impregnated with all possible times and, in its very paradox, this strange synchrony has much to do with both literary effect and the creation of plastic images."*(2)



- Installation view (Figure.4)

- Detail: Mirror sculpture (Figure.5)



- The view of “Radius 250 show” Plant Zero Gallery, Richmond, V.A  
(Figure.6)

=*Sky Mountain* / 2005

Mirror, Styrofoam.

Diameter 8 feet, height 4 feet



- Installation view (Figure.7)



- Installation view in different day (Left: Figure.8, Right: Figure 9)

I was given the great opportunity to take part in Emerging Artist in Residence program for two months at Pilchuck Glass School in Washington State in the fall of 2005. When I got there, I walked through a beautiful breeze way to the main lodge. From there the first thing that I noticed was the grandeur of the sky. It was as if the sky had stepped out of a picture from the Renaissance period. There were grey colored clouds on a pink background, and many straight lines of the sun's rays peeked through the cracks and reached the land. That scene was really spectacular, and it inspired me to try to incorporate the same effects into my work. The sky always exists above us, so I wondered if I could bring it to the ground. This seemed interesting to me.

*Sky Mountain* was made of various sheets of mirror which were put together at angles, and formed a mountain shape. Each mirror reflected and captured different parts of the sky. The clouds in the reflected sky, which existed in the mirrors, were always moving. Consequently each moment we would see a different image in *Sky Mountain*.



**=*Baby Sky Mountain* / 2006**

Mirror, styrofoam

Diameter 10", height 5"

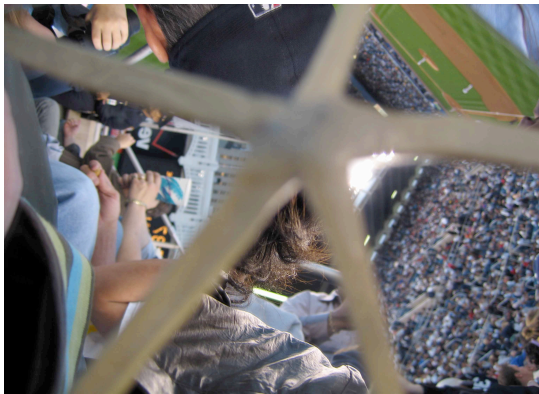
I have been traveling to many places and everywhere I go I carry my travel companion: *Baby Sky Mountain*. I always take snapshots of the landscapes I am seeing with *Baby Sky Mountain* in them. This piece captures the surrounding world like a patched landscape sculpture. The most exciting part of working with photographs is playing with the scale of *Baby Sky Mountain*. By this I mean that sometimes it looks giant and other times very small, depending on the composition of the picture. Also, this mirrored object shows how all the different things happening in one moment can be captured into one picture.

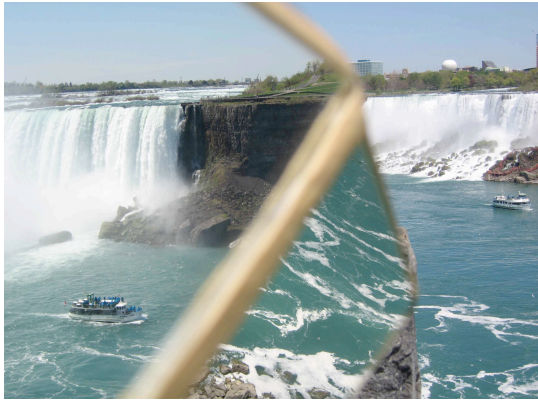


(Figure. 10: The example of 12 pictures out of hundreds of pictures. Follows to next



page.)





### **=*The shafts of light* / 2006**

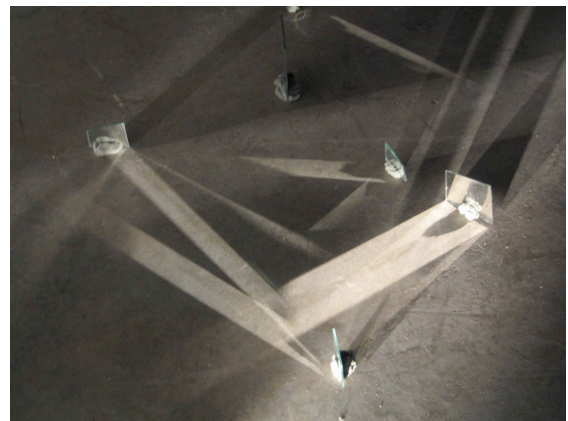
Stage light, mirror

Dimension variable

I became interested in incorporating the reflection of pure light into my work. I initially experimented with a high voltage stage light. In this project, I wanted to create many irregular shafts of light by using scraps of mirrors and only one stage light. Working with the mirrors and the stage light created different densities in the shafts of light, depending on how many times the light was reflected and the distance from the light source.



- Installation view (Figure.11)



- Detail (Figure.12)

### **=*Color stain* / 2006**

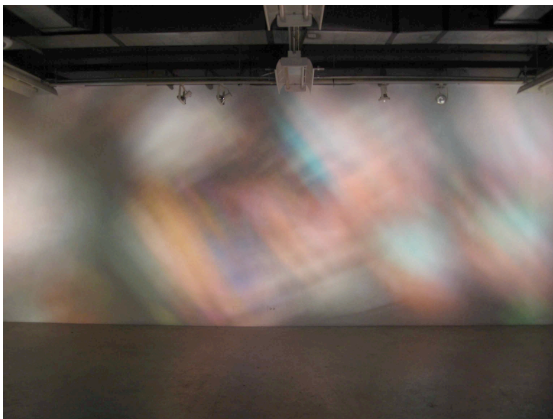
Two stage lights, color gels, mirror



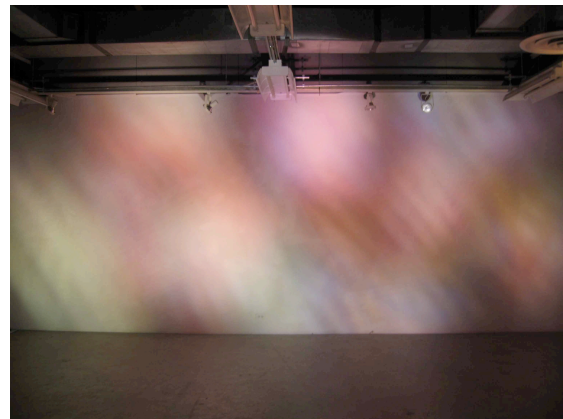
### Dimension variable

At the beginning of 2006, I took a stage lighting course from the VCU Theater Department. There I saw the huge scale of the lighting devices that are used to create the powerful stains of light on a stage. We experimented by mixing a couple of stage lights with different color gels. It was exciting to see the mix of three primary colors of light; red, blue and green, make white. If these colors were mixed with water colors, you would get a dark color close to black. Also if you mix yellow and blue, you would not get green like when you mix water colors, but you will get white. Mixing complementary light sources creates white.

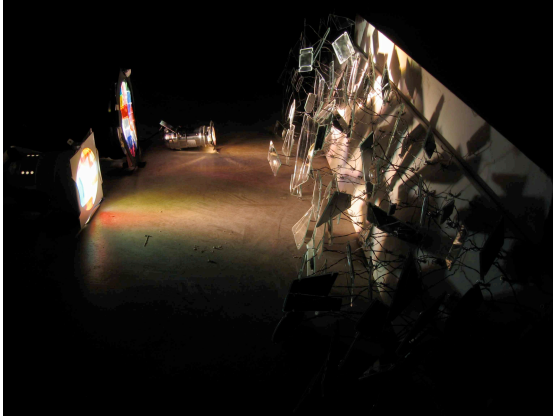
I applied what I had learned from these experiments with the color lights directly into my own work. I made two patchworks out of many color gels, and set them to the stage lights. Also I prepared cut mirrors which were tied with steel wire on board. The mirror board and the stage lights were set on the floor facing towards each other. I could control the angle of the mirror easily and therefore control the reflections of the color light. By using this setting, I created a wall of color.



- Installation view (Figure.13)



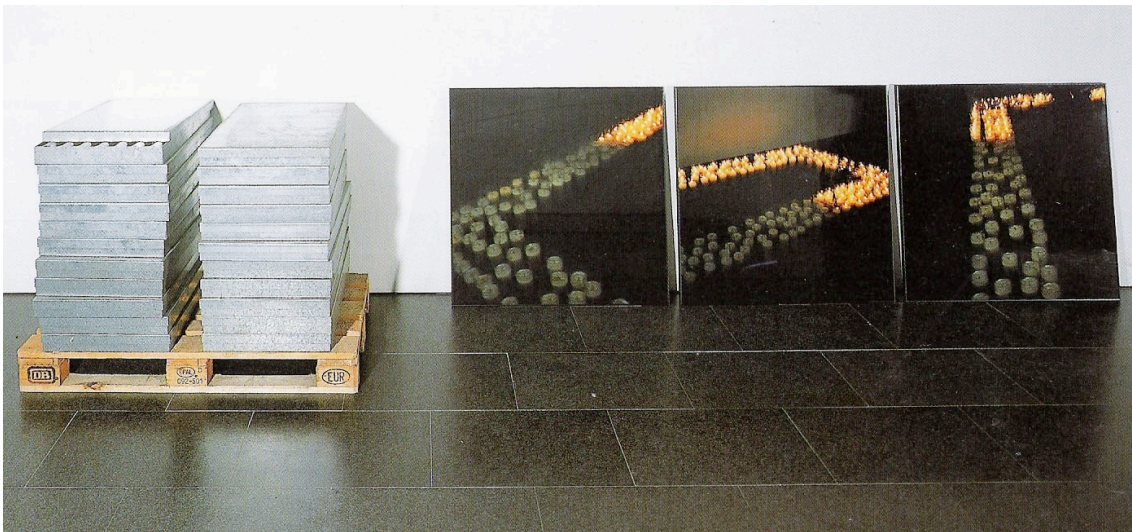
- Installation view with different color (Figure.14)

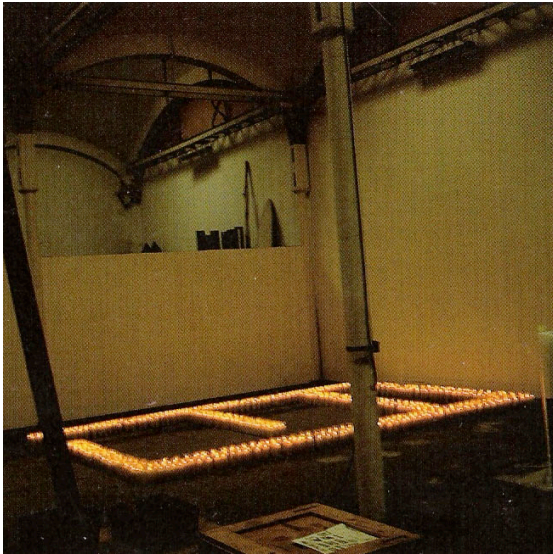


-Detail: mirrors and lights with color gel (Figure 15) - Detail (Figure.16)

### **Content issues and the creation of a relaxing space**

*“Art would not exist without the mystery of the inexplicable” (3)*





-Susana Solano: *Meditaciones No.9 / 1993* (Above: Figure.17, left: Figure.18)

After a year or so spent working with reflective materials, I started to question myself about content issues in my work. While the light itself was very beautiful, I felt as though there was a lack of content in my work. I began to ask myself what it was that I was trying to express by using this material. What kind of space was I trying to see and create? I went to the library to try to answer these questions. I felt relieved when I encountered a work called “*Meditaciones*” by the Spanish artist Susana Solano. While going through the catalog of her work, I was particularly struck by one sentence from her diary, which was written while she was traveling in Africa.

*“Ibrahim de Darkoye me ofrece un cuenco agua y luna”*  
 (=Ibrahim from Darkoye offers me a bowl with water and moon.)(4)

I began to wonder what cultural significance the moon held for the people of Africa, because it seemed to connect so closely with the traditions of Japanese artistic sensibilities. As I read further in the catalog, I encountered some Spanish poems by Robert Juarroz. Some of them connected to the questions I was asking myself.

*(Original version)*

*¿Por que estamos aqui?*

*Este no es nuestro lugar.*

*¿Habrá un lugar para nosotros  
en alguna parte?*

*(English translation)*

*Why we are here?*

*This is not our place.*

*Will there be a place for us somewhere?*

*Tal vez nos define*

*como la luz al día,*

*No tener un lugar en ningún sitio.*

*pero también nos define*

*que podemos crear un lugar.*

*Perhaps we are defined,*

*as the light is by the day,*

*by having no place anywhere.*

*but we are also defined*

*By being able to create a place.*

*Y solo se encuentra algo*

*es un lugar que se crea.*

*Hasta se encuentra uno a si mismo,*

*si es posible encontrarse (5)*

*And something can only be found*

*in a place that is created.*

*Untill one encounters oneself,*

*if it is possible to find oneself.*

When I read this poem, I felt as if my lighting pieces were asking me questions of intent.

It wanted to know why I had been put in this space. It was as if the piece itself was unhappy, and as if it were questioning me: Why are we in this space? ...we are not fitting into the space, this is not our space.

Another poem read:

*(Original version)*

*Un espacio*

*no puede borrar a otro,*

*pero puede arrinconarlo.*

*También los espacios ocupan un lugar,*

*(English translation)*

*One space*

*can not erase another,*

*But may lay it aside.*

*Spaces also occupy a place,*

*en otra dimension  
que es mas que un espacio.*

*In another dimension  
that is more than a space.*

*Hay espacios con una sola voz,  
espacios con muchas voces  
y hasta espacios sin ninguna,  
pero todo espacio esta solo,  
mas solo que aquello que contiene.*

*There are spaces with a single voice,  
spaces with many voices,  
and every spaces with none,  
but every space alone,  
more alone than what it contains.*

*Aunque todo espacios  
se confundal final con todo espacio.  
Aunque todo espacio  
sea un juego imposible,  
Porque nada cabe en nada. (6)*

*Although every space  
is mixed in the end with every space.  
Although every space  
is an impossible game,  
because nothing goes into nothing.*

After I read this poem a number of times, I started to replace the word “light” in place of “space”. Somehow it made sense to me.

*One light  
can not erase another,  
but may lay it aside.  
lights also occupy a light,  
in another dimension that is more than a light.  
There are lights with a single voice,  
lights with many voices,  
and even lights with none,  
but every light is alone,  
more alone than what it contains.*

*Although every light is mixed in the end with every light.  
Although every light is an impossible game,  
because nothing goes into nothing*

When I saw the work “Meditaciones”, I felt simply, I want to have the experience of being in this kind of contemplative space.... Then I asked myself, what does meditation mean to me? Cutting glass sheets free hand was a meditative act to me. Therefore, I started to cut the mirror sheet in various forms: lines, circles, semi circles, organic shapes and so on. The straight line was too easy to cut and looked too sharp to me. I felt most in tune with the organic semi-circle form. Cutting this shape is not as easy as cutting straight line, so I had to pay attention when cutting this form. I enjoyed the tension I felt while performing this act.

I cut and cut, over and over the same kinds of shapes in slightly different scales. Once I had cut what seemed to be an innumerable amount, I started to place them on the floor randomly. When I switched on a couple of spot lights, I saw countless shafts of light which were reflected from the mirrors. I stayed for a while in that space without any stress. I felt healed by seeing this light. There was no particular content in it. I had created a relaxing and sublime visual experience in that space.

Direct light makes people feel fatigue and stress, while an indirect light creates a relaxing effect. With artificial light, we generally have a choice between fluorescent light, and incandescent light. Fluorescent light is usually used for schools and office illumination, because it has the effect of making people’s brains more active. On the other hand, incandescent light has a relaxing, it is commonly used in restaurants to create ambiance. In our busy modern lives, we no longer have the luxury of turning to the light of the moon for comfort. I feel that by using indirect incandescent lighting in my work, I can bring the viewer to a state of awe similar to what Japanese people once felt when looking at the reflected moon on the surface of the water.



*"I am interested in expressionism that has to do with emotion. If you remove the story line or the narrative, your content can be much stronger in terms of emotion."*(7)

**=Pont de la llum / 2006**

Mirror, light

Dimension variable



-Installation view (Figure.19)

### **Light installation in the natural light space**

In this work, I set myself the challenge of installing my piece not in a dark one gallery space, but in the light. My lighting pieces show clearly in the darkness, but the dark space always gives me a kind of theatrical feeling. I wanted therefore to combine both natural light and artificial qualities into my installations.

In this project, I used the same shape that I had used in *Pont de la llum* (Figure. 19). This piece differed from *Pont de la llum*, because the mirrors were stuck onto the wall and arranged as vertical lines. The light and the mirrors created sublime lines of shadows and reflections on the wall. Depending on the distance and density of the lighting, the tonality of the shadows and the reflections were slightly changed. The

combination of subtle tones of light and shadow created a space for relaxation.

=*Llum* / 2006

Cut mirror, light

Dimension variable



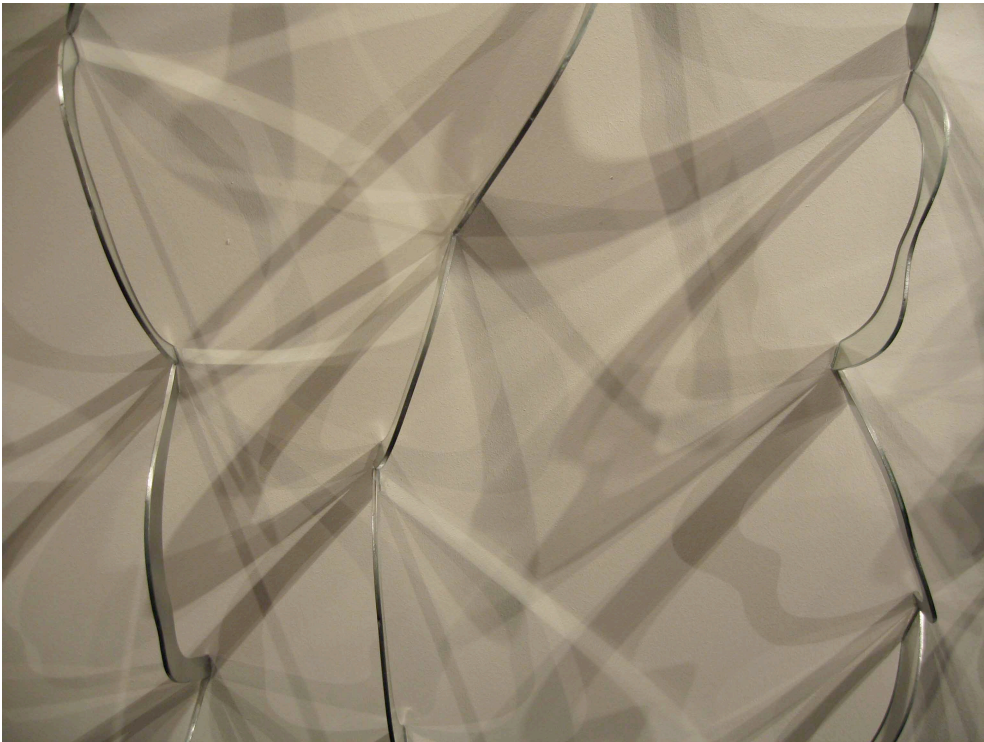
- Installation view (Figure.20)



- Detail (Figure.21)



- "The Bombay Sapphire Prize Exhibition" in London. (Figure.22)



- Detail (Figure.23)



### ***Industrial material***

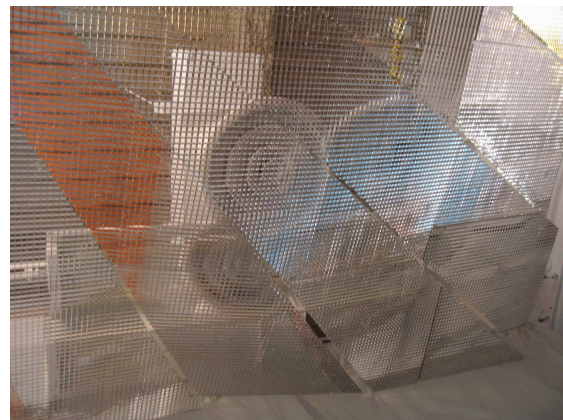
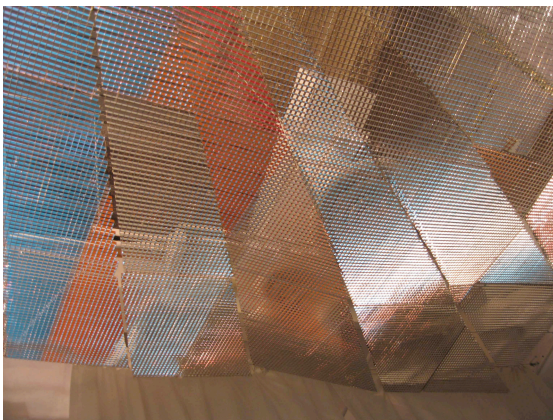
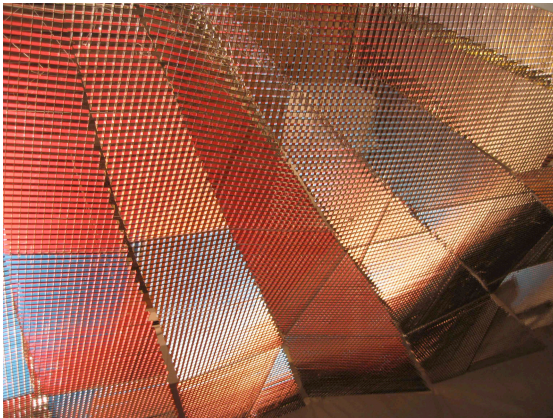
Everyday when I took the elevator to my apartment, I enjoyed seeing the kinetic images in the reflections of the silver plastic ceiling grid. Depending on where I stood in the elevator, I saw different images of reflections in it. In my past works, I was used to using traditional material. I thought I could not handle such strongly industrial material.

The material reflective plastic grids were so very interesting to me, then that I constructed radial lines up grid ceiling. Each line had slightly different angle and each reflected the colors which were arranged on the corner of the wall. Depending on where you are in the space, you will see a different color ceiling.

**=Grid / 2006**

-Plastic grids and color paper, 12 feet x 8 feet

(Above: Figure.24, left: Figure.25, right: Figure.26)



## **Thesis**

In the past, I have worked with the installation of mirrors onto walls, floors and ceilings. The mirrors created a reflection similar to the shape of their form. Sometimes the form was stretched, depending on the surface where the reflections were projected. Sometimes the reflections appeared more than once onto the given surfaces. In this next project, I tried to make the light a form of take which does not correspond to the shape of the reflective material. I chose to work with mylar (a polyester silver film) as the material for my new work. It is often used for its tensile strength, chemical and dimensional stability, gas and aroma barrier properties and as an electrical insulator. Mylar is commonly used in coffee “foil” packaging and pouches for convenience food. It is also used in solar sails as an alternative means of propulsion for spacecraft. NASA makes spacesuits using mylar, which makes them radiation resistant and keeps the astronauts warm. The most interesting characteristic of the mylar to me is that it is easy to bend, and makes distinctive shapes because of its flexibility.

If I stick mylar strips onto the wall, they sway because of their lack of the weight. When there is a breeze, the light, which is the reflection from the mylar, also sways. So the most exciting part of this project was that by using strips of mylar, the visual effect was always changing.

*“You don’t form light with your hands. You don’t carve it away with a knife. It’s not like wax or clay. It’s not like stone or wood. You somehow have to form it another way, which is a little bit like how we form sound.”(8)*

The combination of the halogen lights and the cool white fluorescence create different tonalities in the reflection of the light. Halogen light creates yellowish reflection of light and cool white fluorescence creates pale blue reflection of light.

This work has the appearance of a drawing. When I stick the mylar onto the wall, I actually feel the strips of mylar are like pencil marks that I am drawing. I use the light as a sort of “filler” almost like coloring in the lines with water color. I do not design the idea on the paper before starting the installation, because when I draw with the mylar, I prefer to enjoy the sense of improvisation then and there. Line changes depend on my mood in that moment, and are effected by what music I am listening to. When I see the white wall at the beginning, I do not have any expectations of how my mylar drawing will turn out. I like this sense of liveliness. This process thrills me because most of my past pieces were built according to a plan.

Most of my lighting pieces are titled, “llum”. Llum means light in Catalan, which is the language that is spoken around the Barcelona area, Spain. The Catalunya region in Spain is where I had spent my twenties, and everyday I felt the Mediterranean sunlight in my life. The Mediterranean sunlight is very bright and this warm light reached every part of the land. The flavors of the fresh vegetables and fruits which grow in this land are very rich, and I feel the Mediterranean light in them. The Mediterranean light is strongly imprinted in my body.

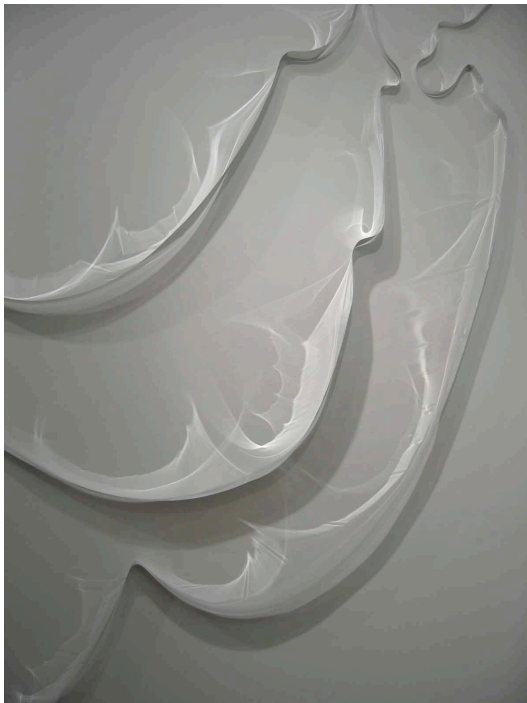
*“Light is a powerful medium-very powerful material-but the conditions for showing its power are strangely fragile.”(9)*

= *llum d'onada*/ 2007

- Mylar, light
- Dimension variable

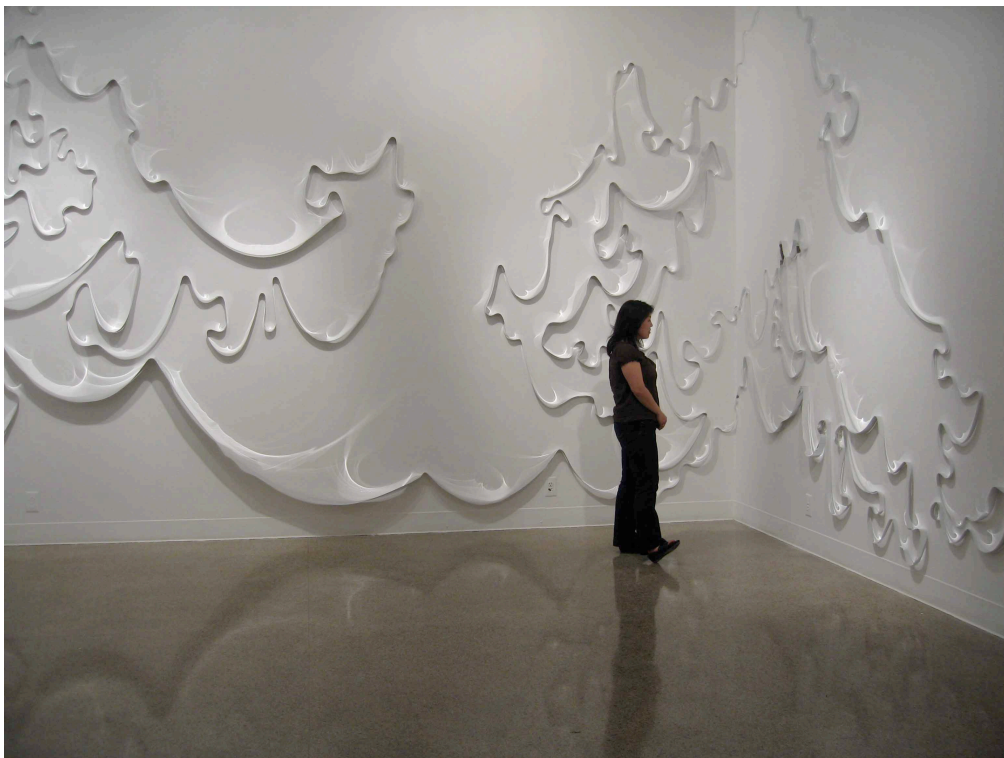


- Installation view (Figure. 27)



- Left: detail (Figure.28).-Right: detail; an example of the lightings of cool fluorescent and halogen light create different tonality of colors. (Figure.29)





- Above: Installation view with a viewer (Figure. 30)

- Below: Installation view with a viewer (Figure. 31)



## Conclusion

After seven years of making my glass works in Spain, I came to the VCU glass program in order to change and challenge myself. The United States is considered to be on the forefront of the contemporary art world. I wondered how people who have developed a critical eye would react to my work.

When I first arrived at VCU, I was very surprised by the level of the students' and professors' work. I was used to seeing traditional "glass works" in Europe, where for the most part, the material is the primary concern. I felt that in the VCU glass area the concepts came before the material. I was so shocked that after my first day that I decided I must look at what I was most interested in. I could no longer simply say "glass" as I had said it before.

In exploring my interests, I started to analyze what glass is. My primary interest in glass is in its transparency. I started to use other materials which have this same property: stockings, thin papers, and so on. Through experimenting with these materials I was trying to see the material of glass with fresh eyes.

While discovering the primary interest of my work, I also became aware of the presence of the color of the sun light everyday. Richmond sun light was white to me, when I compared it with the yellowish Mediterranean sun light; *llum*. My research into light became my focus. I experimented with many reflective materials such as mirrors, silver grids, mirrored glass and silver mylar to create my light works. In the final semester I have become interested in making my work have a kinetic presence. The movements in my kinetic pieces are very subtle, reacting to the movement of the air from a passer-by. It is a similar feeling to the swaying of the moon reflected on the surface of the water.

My recent light works are based on my direct experience of the Mediterranean sun light. I have lived and traveled through many countries, and my personal experiences are always evolving, always accumulating. These experiences are “reflected” in my mind, and in how I see the world. They are the source of all my work.

## **Bibliography**

- (1) Susana Solano: Imagen y memoria, cinco grabados, Editions F.B. Paris, 1989
- (2) Aurora Garcia: Imagen y memoria, p.65
- (3) Susana Solano: Muecas/ Museu D'art Contemporani de Barcelona, 1999
- (4) Susana Solano: Muecas/ Susana Solano, p.24
- (5) Robert Juarros: Muecas/ Susana Solano, p.17, 216
- (6) Robert Juarroz: Muecas/ Susana Solano, p.15, 216
- (7) James Turrell: Into the light, p.42
- (8) James Turrell: Into the light, p.41
- (9) James Turrell: Into the light, p.45

## List of figures

- (1) <http://www.thirteenmonths.com/picturepages/twA/twA17.htm>
- (2) Are eyes more eloquent than lips? /2005/ Plaster, mirror, 5" x 8" (each) an installation view
- (3) Are eyes more eloquent than lips? /2005/ a detail
- (4) The landscape in mind /2005/ Mirror sculpture, 2 projectors, 280 slide images of Spain/ Dimension Variable/ an installation view
- (5) The landscape in mind /2005/ a detail
- (6) The landscape in mind /2005/ an installation view
- (7) Sky Mountain /2005/ Mirror, styroform/ Diameter 8 feet, height 4 feet
- (8) Sky Mountain /2005/ an installation view
- (9) Sky Mountain /2005/ an installation view
- (10) Baby Sky Mountain /2006/ Mirror, styroform/ Diameter 10", height 5"/ 12 pictures out of hundreds of pictures
- (11) The shafts of light /2006/ Stage light, mirror/ Dimension Variable/ an installation view
- (12) The shafts of light /2006/ a detail
- (13) Color stain /2006/ 2 stage lights, color gels, mirror/ Dimension Variable/ an installation view
- (14) Color stain /2006/ an installation with different color
- (15) Color stain /2006/ a detail
- (16) Color stain /2006/ a detail
- (17) Meditaciones No,9/1993-1994/ Susana Solano/ 704 candles, 3 color photographs 93,5x93,5cm
- (18) Meditaciones No,9/1993/ Susana Solano/ 704 candles and flame/ 16,5 x 550 x 350 cm
- (19) Pont de la llum /2006/ Mirror, light/ Dimension Variable/ an installation view
- (20) Llum /2006/ Mirror, light/ Dimension Variable/ an installation view
- (21) Llum /2006/ a detail
- (22) Llum /2006/ an installation view of the Bombay Sapphire Prize Exhibition in London
- (23) Llum /2006/ a detail
- (24) Grid /2006/ Plastic grid, color papers/ 12 feet x 8 feet/ an installation view
- (25) Grid /2006/ an installation view
- (26) Grid /2006/ an installation view
- (27) Llum d'onada /2007/ an installation view
- (28) Llum d'onada /2007/ a detail
- (29) Llum d'onada /2007/ a detail: an example of the lighting of cool fluorescent and halogen light create different tonality of the colors
- (30) Llum d'onada /2007/ an installation view with a viewer
- (31) Llum d'onada /2007/ an installation view with a viewer

## **Vita**

### **Kazue Taguchi**

#### **Education**

- 2007 Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA  
Master of Fine Arts, Glass
- 2003 The Barcelona Glass Foundation, Barcelona, Spain  
Contemporary stained glass, Restoration, Glass Design Course
- 1997 Joshibi University of Art and Design, Kanagawa, Japan  
Bachelor of Fine Arts, Oil painting and Lithograph Prints Course

#### **Fellowship/ Award/ Residency**

- 2007 The Pola Art Foundation Fellowship (Japan)  
Jutta Cuny-Franz Supporting Awards (Dusseldorf, Germany)  
Finalists of “Young Glass” Glass Museum Ebeltoft Competition (Denmark)
- 2006 Finalists of the Bombay Sapphire Prize Exhibition (London, UK)  
VCU Travel Grant for Bombay Sapphire Prize Exhibition in London  
VCU Travel Grant for Friesen Gallery show in Seattle  
VCU Travel Grant for visiting Art Basel in Miami
- 2005 The Agency for Cultural Affairs Government of Japan/One year overseas program  
Takako Ohmura fellowship/ Joshibi University of Art and Design (Japan)
- 2005/9~11 Emerging Artist in Residence at the Pilchuck Glass School (Seattle)
- 2005/1~5 Artist in Residence at Virginia Commonwealth University/ Glass area
- 2004 Pere Jou Sculpture Competition, 3<sup>rd</sup> Awards (Sitges, Barcelona)
- 2002 New Glass Review Competition 23/2002, 24/2003, 27/2006, 28/2007 (USA)

#### **Solo Exhibition**

- 2007 Kunst Palast Museum und Leiter Glasmuseum (Dusseldorf, Germany)
- 2004 Gallery Fila 5 (Madrid, Spain)

#### **Group Exhibition**

- 2007 Young Glass 2007, Ebeltoft Glass Museum (Denmark)  
Two Persons Show, Lorch-Seidel Gallery (Berlin)  
MFA Thesis Show, Anderson Gallery (Richmond, VA)  
Exchange Show, Play Space Gallery (San Francisco)
- 2006 Pilchuck Emerging Artists Show, Friesen Gallery (Seattle, WA)

	Bombay Sapphire Prize Exhibition (London, UK)
	Candidacy Show-Goods, Gallery 5 (Richmond, VA)
2005	Emociones, San Fernando de Henares (Madrid, Spain)
	Radius 250, Gallery Plant Zero (Richmond, VA)
2004	Arte Joven en Vidrio, La Granja Glass Museum (Segovia, Spain)
	Pere Jou Sculpture Show (Sitges, Spain)
2003	Now Vitral- Stained Glass for Architecture of Today, College of Technical Architecture of Barcelona (Barcelona)
2002	Barcelona Glass Artists Show, Artonivo gallery (Burgos, Belgium)
	Moncada Taller Gallery (Barcelona)
	Mercat de les Flores Theater (Barcelona)
	Emerging Artist from Europe, Glass Art Society Conference (Amsterdam)
2001	Las Meninas 2001, Gallery Espai Vidre (Barcelona)
	Cyuwa Gallery (Tokyo, Ginza)
2000	Glass Toy Show, Gallery Espai Vidre (Barcelona)
	Art Festival Penedes 2000 /The path to hope (Vila Franca del Penedes, Barcelona)
	Paloma Dotze gallery (Vila Franca del Penedes, Barcelona)
	Glass Art in Past 10 Years in Spain, La Granja Glass Museum (Segovia, Spain)
1998	Metropolitan Museum of Ibaraki (Ibaraki, Japan)

### **Collections**

La Granja Glass Museum/ Fundacion Centro Nacional del Vidrio (Segovia, Spain)  
 Moet Hennesy Spain, Chandon S.A. (Vila Franca del Penedes, Barcelona)  
 Hotel Chateau Frontenac (Quebec, Canada)  
 Private Collections

### **Articles**

2007	New Glass Review 28
2006	Seattle Times/ Matthew Kangas/ October 14th New Glass Review 27
2005	25 years of New Glass Review/The Corning Museum of Glass /Tina Oldknow (p158, 204, 242, 243,)
2004	Southeast European Contemporary Glass Artists /Paloma Pastor Vina del Rey (p53-54) New Glass Review 24
2003	Spanish Glass Magazine "Revista del Vidrio Plano.vol 81" (p30-31)

- ELLE DECO/no. 81 Spain (p72. 74)
- New Glass Review 23
- 2001 Spanish Glass Magazine “Cuadros de Vidrio 3”(p28-29)
- 2000 ABC Spanish News Paper/ September (p.23)
- El 3 de Vuit Spanish News Paper/ October 13th (p/68)
- El Pais Spanish News Paper/ November 16th (p.5)